A Quarterly Newsletter Of

North Andover NASWAC Solid Waste Advisory Committee

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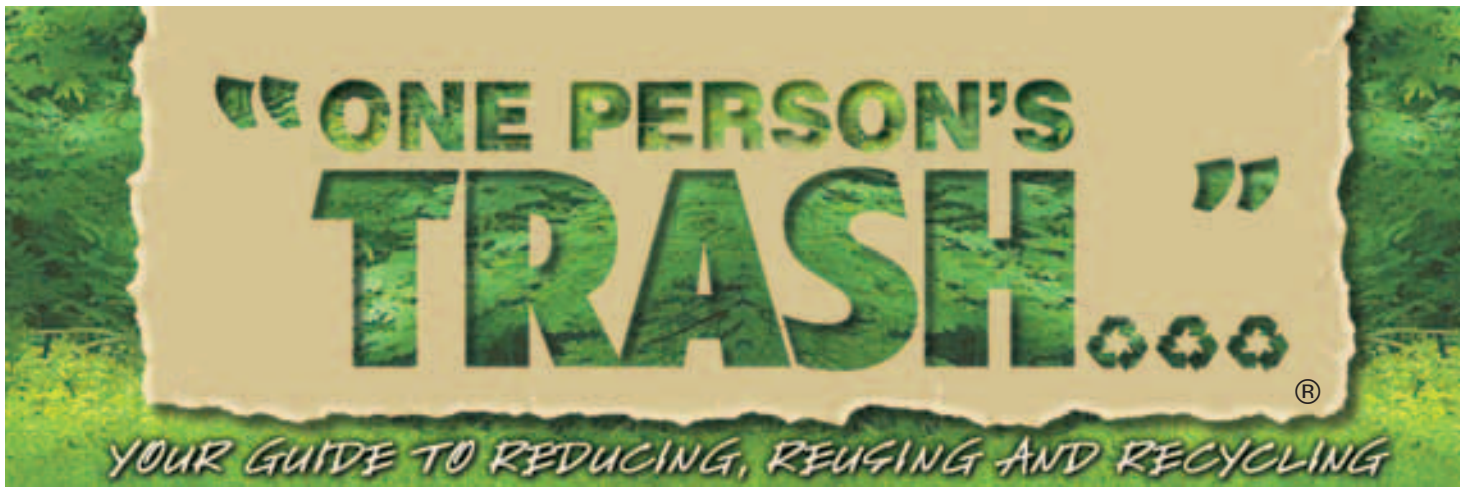
Winter 2007



North Andover receives grant

MassDEP awards funds to plan for expanded school recycling

After the implementation of the Curbside Waste Ban Enforcement program, residential recycling in North Andover has grown dramatically. At the same time, the former North Andover Solid Waste Advisory Committee liaison, Joanne Parrill, reached out to all schools to assist with starting bottle and can recycling and with increasing paper recycling. Due to these initial efforts, including the great work of school custodians, passionate teachers, and enthusiastic parents, six of our seven schools are recycling beverage containers. To find out what's happening at the High School, read the article written by senior Cassie Bowe.

Paper recycling needs our attention throughout the district. Unfortunately, recycling at local schools has lagged far behind, even though all schools have access to recycling services. By one estimate, less than 20 percent of paper, the most easily recyclable item of all, is being captured. On average, each students generates 8 pounds of paper per week. However, as you can see from the table at right, we aren't capturing much of this.

In an attempt to grow school recycling, the Town of North Andover applied for and was recently awarded a Technical Assistance Grant by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). This grant will fund a six-month study which will address these issues:

- Drafting a long-term recycling disposal contract to ensure recycling access by the schools
- Establishing separate collection of cardboard at each school
- Developing programs in cooperation with custodial and kitchen staff to increase separation of recyclables
- Assessing equipment needs and costs of implementing broader recycling, including any savings to be realized on trash handling and disposal
- Evaluating alternative systems for paper recycling

By the end of the study period, we will have a plan to permanently expand recycling in the schools and will begin to implement equipment and operational changes.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

2005 Estimated Paper Recycling

School	Pounds per Student per Week
Atkinson	0.7
Franklin	2.5
High School	0.4
Kittredge	1.6
Middle School	1.0
Sargent	0.5
Thomson	1.3

Ready. Set. Recycle!

By Cassie Bowe

For years, students have been pained by not being able to recycle their plastic goods. For some, the lack of recycling at lunch meant taking home bottles, storing them in their lockers, or worse—throwing them away! This year, however, the many environmentally conscious students of North Andover High School (NAHS) can finally take a breather, thanks to the new cafeteria recycling bins.

Senior Matt Weisman recycles at NAHS.

The red bins in the cafeteria are not just fabulous basketball nets, they are a way to protect the environment, and—believe it or not—save the town money. This is because the town has to pay for every ton of trash that it sends to the incinerator. The town does not pay for every ton of recycling, however, and is even paid for every ton of paper recycled. In short, recycling is good in more than one way.

The brightly painted bins are part of a highly researched recycling program started by a small group of students. The students worked with the janitors, their faculty advisor Mr. Del Colle, the Department of Public Works and many others to put in place the simple yet effective plastic recycling program. Some may be confused about what to recycle, but this should clear it up.

- DO RECYCLE — plastic milk bottles, plastic water bottles, plastic Powerade bottles, etc. Also, recycle any aluminum cans.
- DON'T RECYCLE — TRASH! The recycling bins must be cleaned out daily by Olivia Cristaldi and Pat Welch. They already have to clean the liquid from the bottles (to make sure bees are not attracted to the plastic) and must toil twice as long if there is any trash in the bins.

Recycling in school is extremely important. It helps to build good habits both inside and outside of school. Olivia Cristaldi feels that throwing away plastic is not an option. She said, "People think that they can just throw their plastic bottles into whichever bin is closest to them, but it is much more complicated than that. Not recycling, and wastefulness in general, has serious consequences environmentally. If we don't start recycling now, and keep recycling in the future, we will be in big trouble."

Our plastic recycling program is definitely a step in the right direction. To make it truly successful, however, students need to really get involved. So remember, you're not cool if you don't recycle.

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Have you been to the recycling drop-off lately? If so, you've probably noticed our newest recycling container for books, CDs, and other media. This "Got Books?" recycling container is next to the Planet-Aid boxes at the DPW Yard, located at 384 Osgood Street.

You can recycle all of these items in the Got Books? container:

- Hardcover and paperback books, including textbooks
- Videos
- CDs and DVDs
- Records, LPs
- Sports Cards
- Computer Software and Games
- Comic Books

Books, DVDs, and other materials that are dropped off will be offered to schools and libraries first. After that, the remaining donated items will go into one of the Charity Book Sales, proceeds of which benefit various local non-profit organizations.

Got Books? recycles both usable items that aren't sold and unusable items. The Town's Solid Waste Advisory Committee hopes to use the funds raised through their newest initiative to support their ongoing waste reduction programs.

Does North Andover Need PAYT?

The time for Pay As You Throw may be now

Our town has made impressive progress on its trash management over the past two years. The level of recycled goods continues to climb as more residents use one or more red bins for curbside pickup of paper, cardboard, glass, plastic, and metal cans. Another portion of residents makes use of the drop-off area at the DPW Yard.

In addition to the items listed above that are accepted every day, more items are now eligible for drop off on the third Saturday of each month. This list includes scrap metal, TVs, CRTs (computer monitors), computers, and oil-based paint. For the complete and updated list, check our website, www.townofnorthandover.com.

Bulky items, such as couches and desks, can be put out curbside (one item per week per household) and "white goods," such as large appliances, are picked up for a fee when you make an appointment with the DPW.

So, with all of this potential to reduce the amount of trash that actually ends up at the incinerator, why change anything and consider a different system? The answer is simple: North Andover still generates an average of 2,600 pounds of trash per household per year—a lot by any measure. Communities that do not have Pay As You Throw (PAYT) programs average 2,400 pounds per household per year, but those with PAYT generate only about 1,500 pounds per household.

Clearly, we don't have a trash *disposal* problem; we have a trash *generation* problem. Why is this?

Our trash "habit" may be ingrained and hard to break. If we no longer need

(Continued on Page 4)

Treasure from trash

Across the country, artists are taking trash and turning it into treasure. From New York City, where Justin Gignac collects trash from sidewalks and subways, to California, where San Francisco's Solid Waste Transfer Station and Recycling Center hosts Artists-in-Residence, creative people are taking what we discard and turning it into art.

Metalsmith Harriete Estel Berman, who lives and works in San Mateo, California, uses tin packaging to create colorful teacups. Berman writes of her work: "Like recurring conversations with friends over cups of tea or coffee, this work reflects the consuming conversation of our consumer society. The recycled tin containers used to construct this work are diverted from a destiny as trash, revitalizing the mundane into the extraordinary."

To see Berman's teacups and other art, visit http://harriete-estel-berman.info/.

San Francisco Recycling and Disposal is home not just to a transfer station and recycling center, but also to an art studio and several artists each year. Artists are invited to work in residence at the center, using found materials as the raw materials for their art. Exhibits have featured trees made from Styrofoam blocks; sculptures made from scrap metal, wood, and even golf clubs; old photographs and old books used as the canvas for mixed media creations; and much more. The Artist-in-Residence program began in 1990. For more information or to see the work of artists who have been part of this program, visit www.sunsetscavenger.com/AIR/.

Meanwhile, across the continent in New York City, artist Justin Gignac is picking up trash from the streets, sidewalks, and subways, combing Yankee Stadium, and haunting conventions. After capturing theater tickets, broken bottles, hand-written notes, and more, he sorts the trash and arranges it in clear plastic boxes, documenting when the garbage was "picked." He has even created special edition boxes to commemorate events such as New Year's Eve in Times Square. For more information on Justin's work, visit www.nycgarbage.com/.

These are just a few of the artists creating treasure from trash. Whether your taste in art tends toward the fine or the functional, there is probably an artist creating treasures you would love from the found.

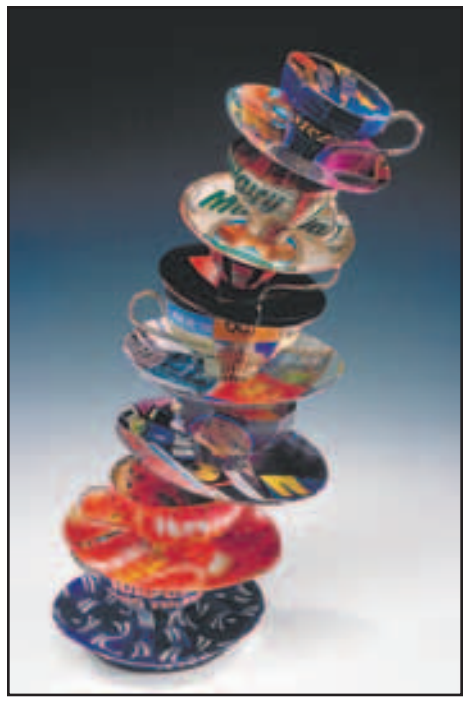
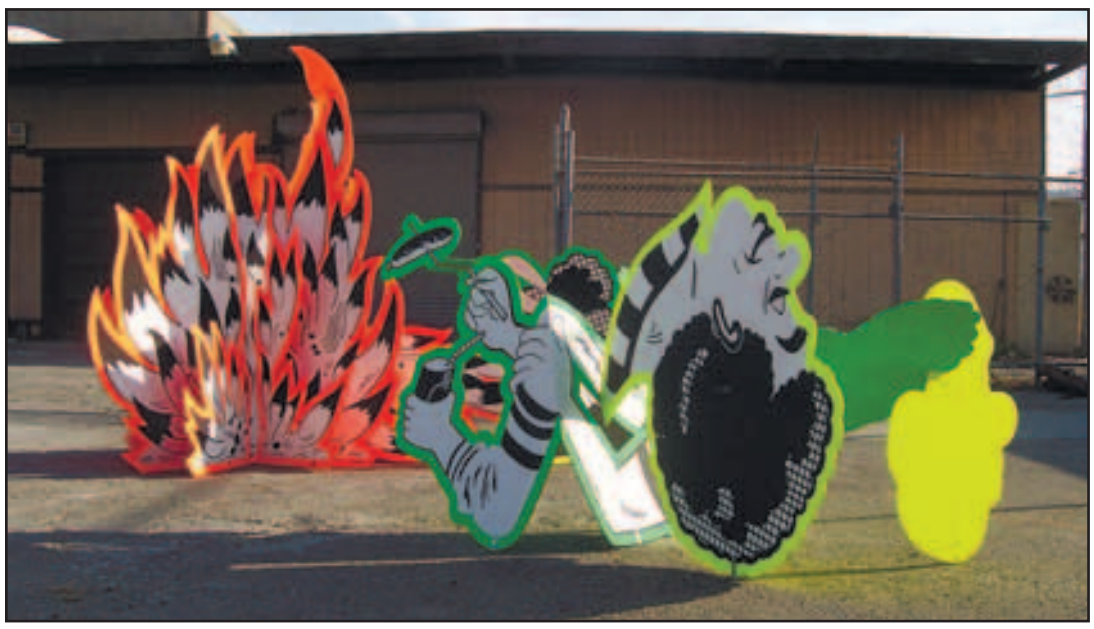


Photo courtesy of Harriete Estel Berman

Images courtesy of Justin Gignac



Kim Weller created "Friendly Fire" as an Artist-in-Residence. *Photo courtesy of Norcal Waste Systems, Inc.*

Are you WasteWise?

WasteWise is a free, voluntary partnership program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through which organizations reduce their waste, improving their bottom line and the environment. WasteWise is flexible, allowing partners to choose waste reduction programs designed to meet their needs. All organizations—including large and small businesses; nonprofit organizations; and federal, state, local, and tribal governments—are eligible to join.

To achieve their waste reduction goals, WasteWise partners have access to these great resources:

- The WasteWise Technical Assistance Team
- The WasteWise Helpline, a toll-free service
- The WasteWise Website, including special "members-only" sections
- Partner forums, grouping businesses and institutions by sector for peer-to-peer support and information sharing
- Personalized Climate Profiles to calculate a "climate footprint" and report results in real-life equivalencies (such as number of cars removed from the road or tree seedlings planted)
- Fact sheets and publications by industry sector
- Awards and recognition programs

Begun in 1994, WasteWise now has more than 1,900 partners and endorsers nationwide. Since the program began, WasteWise partners have reduced more than 124 million tons of waste.

For more information about WasteWise, visit the website, www.epa.gov/wastewise; e-mail ww@erg.com; or call 1-800-EPA-WISE (372-9473).

Source: EPA's WasteWise Program, www.epa.gov/wastewise

In 2006, two partners were inducted into the WasteWise Hall of Fame: Guardian Automotive – Ligonier Plant and Constellation Energy/BGE. At the same time, 37 other partners received awards and honorable mentions for their outstanding efforts. Here are four examples of the winning partners' achievements:

- Constellation Energy increased its ash recycling rate from less than 10 percent to more than 50 percent over the last 10 years.
- Eastern Illinois University donated 615 tons of boiler ash to improve traction on snow- and ice-covered roads.
- Amgen donated 19 tons of leftover food to a local food bank.
- Kitsap County, Washington piloted an unwanted mail and fax waste reduction program, collecting more than 1,200 pieces of unwanted mail and 1,000 unwanted faxes.

QUOTES REQUOTED

On Spaceship Earth there are no passengers; everybody is a member of the crew. We have moved into an age in which everybody's activities affect everybody else.

Marshall McLuhan, 1911–1980
Media Critic and Author

The composting cafeteria

What will customers think of compostable plastic plates, bowls, cups, and cutlery? Can this biobased cafeteria ware be successfully composted with food scraps, leftovers, and outdated food? These are some of the questions that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency set out to answer during a pilot project at the USDA's employee cafeteria.

During this three-month pilot program, the cafeteria switched from regular plastic service ware to biobased, compostable plastic ware. Also, in the food preparation areas, compostable organic wastes were separated from non-compostable waste. In the lunchroom, employees sorted compostable and non-compostable waste into clearly marked containers.

By the end of the pilot program, nearly 33,500 employees had been served. Fewer than one-half of one percent of the patrons made negative comments during the program. In fact, more complaints were received after the pilot was over when traditional polystyrene products were reintroduced.

The compostable materials were taken to a USDA research facility. A total of 11,370 pounds of compostable cafeteria materials, which included about 10,935 pounds of food and 435 pounds of biobased cafeteria ware, were delivered to the facility. This material was mixed with 168 cubic yards of leaves and grass for composting. Only 20 pounds of non-compostable plastics had to be screened from the compost, a contamination rate of less than 0.18 percent.

The finished compost was used in gardens outside the same USDA building where the lunches had been served.

This project showed that biobased plastics in a large-scale cafeteria can and do work. Some challenges remain, of course. For instance, the number of biobased food service products available is still somewhat limited, and, as a result, the prices are higher than comparable non-compostable polystyrene and other plastic products. However, as more facilities experiment with compostable food service ware, more products will become available and prices will come down.

Biobased plastics are made from renewable farm commodities, such as corn, soybeans, or grasses. Traditional plastics are made primarily from petroleum byproducts.

Read more about it!

Learn more about biobased products and their uses at these websites:

www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/plants/pdfs/cafeteriaware.pdf
www.biobased.oce.usda.gov/fb4p/
www.bpiworld.org

What's waste got to do with it?

If you read, listen to, or watch the news, you've heard a lot lately about "climate change." The climate change to which these reports are referring is the warming of Earth's atmosphere that has resulted because "greenhouse gases" are absorbing and holding more heat.

Without greenhouse gases, we'd be in a lot of trouble. The average temperature of the Earth without greenhouse gases would be a chilly -2 degrees Fahrenheit. Instead, we enjoy a balmy 57 degrees Fahrenheit. Clearly, we need some greenhouse gases. But as with so many things in life, there is too much of a good thing.

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, human activities—from deforestation to the burning of fossil fuels—have increased the production of greenhouse gases, leading to a 1 degree Fahrenheit increase in the Earth's average surface temperature in just 100 years. A rise of even a few degrees in the Earth's average temperature may lead to more frequent and intense storms, flooding of low-lying areas, changes in regional weather patterns, and an increase in infectious diseases carried by pests such as mosquitoes.

This not-so-desirable climate change will not easily be reversed, but our actions do and will make a difference—for better or worse. Reducing your waste, recycling, and composting are three simple steps that will reduce the production of greenhouse gases and help slow climate change. Here's how:

- Using less, reusing items that have already been produced and shipped, and recycling all save energy. When we use less energy, we burn fewer fossil fuels and emit less carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, into our environment.
- Reusing and recycling paper products allows more trees to remain standing. Standing trees absorb carbon dioxide, a process called "carbon sequestration." Carbon dioxide being held by trees isn't being released into the atmosphere.
- Composting yard trimmings and food discards releases fewer greenhouse gases, specifically methane, than landfilling the same materials.

Increasing our national recycling rate by just 5 percent could have the same, positive effect on greenhouse gas emissions as removing nearly 8 million cars from our roadways for an entire year!

To help measure the effects of waste reduction and recycling, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency commissioned the study, "Solid Waste Management and Greenhouse Gases: A Life-Cycle Assessment of Emissions and Sinks" (Updated October 2006 and posted at www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/waste/SWMGHGreport.html). The study evaluated 16 types of waste materials, including common household containers, papers, and yard trimmings. The results? Waste prevention (using less and reusing more of what we already have) generally provides the greatest climate benefits and contributes the least to negative climate change. Recycling and composting are the next best approaches.

To learn more, visit www.epa.gov/climatechange.

Rate Your Reduction

Read each statement and rate your actions on a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always).

I read labels and follow instructions carefully when using lawn and garden chemicals.

1 2 3 4 5
Never Always

I give away or sell clothes that my family no longer needs.

1 2 3 4 5
Never Always

I clean up household spills with rags and then wash them for reuse.

1 2 3 4 5
Never Always

I carry a reusable bag, such as a canvas tote, to hold library books and retail purchases.

1 2 3 4 5
Never Always

I purchase recycled-content printer paper.

1 2 3 4 5
Never Always

I recycle all of my beverage bottles and cans—even those I finish away from home.

1 2 3 4 5
Never Always

I replace burned-out incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents.

1 2 3 4 5
Never Always

Add together the numbers from each of your answers. Here's how you rate:

35: You are a waste reduction machine!

25-34: You have a reduce-reuse-recycle routine. Keep up the good work!

20-24: You're on the right track. Remember that good habits take regular practice!

15-19: Set your sights a bit higher. A little improvement will go a long way.

7-14: Resolve to turn one of your "nevers" into an "always." We know you can do it!

WHAT'S UP?

Our Spring Yard Waste Collection will be held in April. The exact dates will depend on when the snow melts. Check the recycling website, www.townofnorthandover.com, in early spring for exact dates. This collection, for branches that have come down over the winter, will be scheduled for two weeks and follows the weekly trash schedule. Bagged leaves are not collected in the spring. Branches should be left loose at the curb with the butt end facing the street because they will be put through a mobile chipper at the curb.

❖❖❖

Make your home safer this spring, and get rid of leftover Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) safely. We accept HHW for recycling and safe disposal at spring and fall special collections. **Our Spring HHW Day will be Saturday, April 21 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** Residents are allowed to drop off HHW at no charge. If you only have a small amount of material, consider consolidating it with a neighbor's, which will save the town money. The Town pays for the collection and proper disposal of all of the HHW received.

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On Saturday, April 28, we'll hold our fifth annual Earth Day Cleanup. It's not too early for you and your family to think about spring and a great community service project. Let us know that you're interested by sending an e-mail to recycle@townofnorthandover.com.

We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

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Funded by North Andover Department of Public Works

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Please recycle this publication after you have read it!

Tina Talks Trash!

Dear Tina:
I have some asphalt roof shingles that the builder left at my house (a stack about a foot high). How do I dispose of them? Also I have a dehumidifier that I put with the trash but it was not taken. How should I dispose of this? I also have a double kitchen sink that I need to dispose of. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

Thank you,
Bob M.

Dear Bob:
Thanks for the e-mail. Disposal of construction waste is a common question, because it is not easy. The contract with our trash hauler, Waste Management, excludes the pickup of any construction waste.

In the case of shingles, there are many types that contain asbestos, and the trash collectors are not trained to tell the difference. Many times even a professional roofer removing shingles cannot tell by looking and has to have them tested to determine appropriate disposal.

If it is not much material, you may try contacting the builder and trying to work something out. If you know someone who is having remodeling done at their home and has a construction dumpster onsite, you may offer them $20 to let you chuck the pile in. Be sure to ask first!

You can look for more information at www.earth911.org. At this site, you simply type our ZIP code in the upper left corner, click on "Reuse and Recycling," and look at the category of construction waste. You should be able to find processors in the area for your material.

The dehumidifier is classified as a "white good" or appliance. All appliances are picked up curbside only after you make an appointment and pay the required disposal fee. At the www.townofnorthandover.com website, just click on Town Departments, scroll to Public Works Division, select Solid Waste and Recycling, and then click on Appliance Pickup where you'll find the form and procedure. Appliances containing refrigerant, such as dehumidifiers, must go through a special process to remove the Freon prior to recycling as scrap metal. I just got rid of a dehumidifier myself and I believe the disposal fee is $25 for non-Freon appliances and $30 for Freon-containing appliances.

Lastly, the kitchen sink. If this is a metal sink, I'd suggest taking it to the DPW Yard during their Saturday hours. They are open every third Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon. We now have Scrap Metal recycling near the back of the facility. An attendant can direct you.

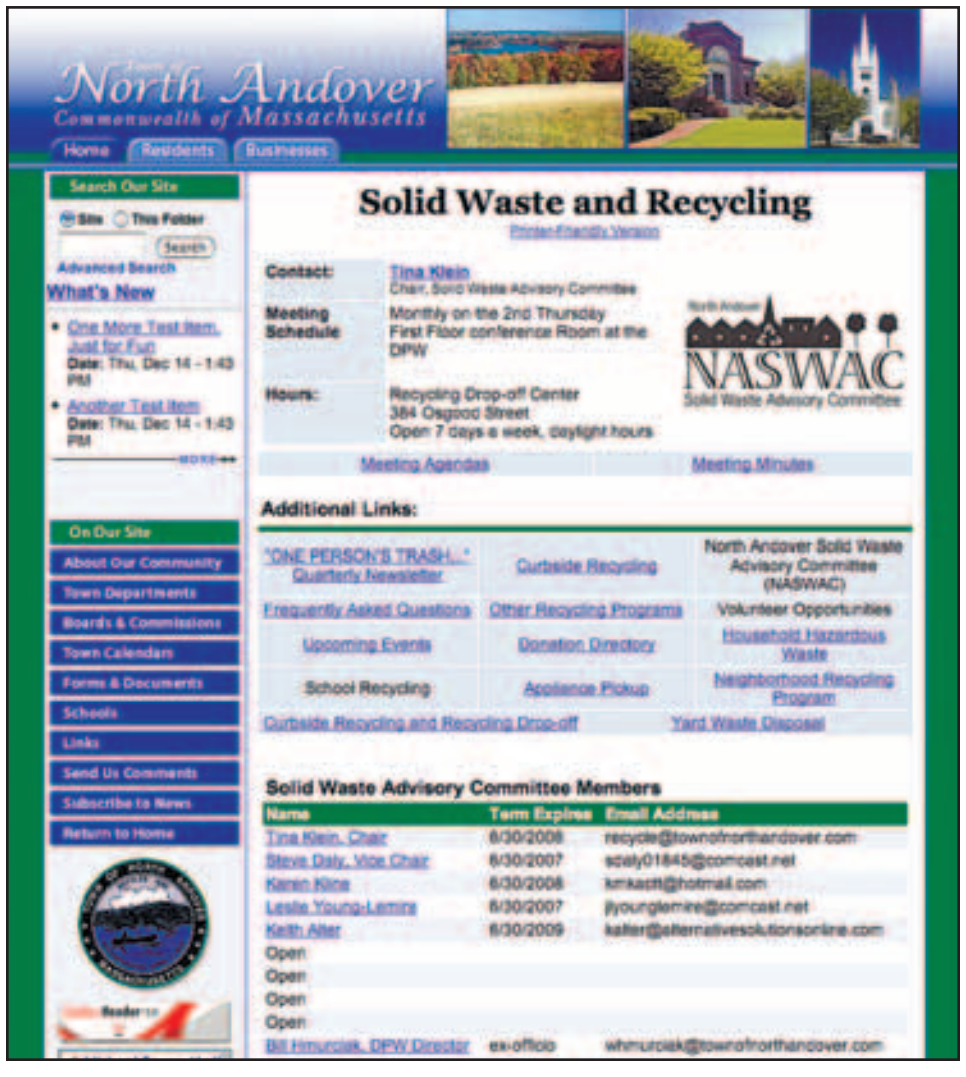
If the sink is not metal, you should be able to put it out with your regular trash. You are allowed one bulky item per week, and this could count as your bulky item.

Good questions! Trash (or solid waste, as it is called) keeps getting more complex as we find ways to reuse materials and keep them out of the incinerators and landfills.

Happy recycling,
Tina

Check out our new site!

The town's fabulous new website launched on December 1st. Surf over to www.TownofNorthAndover.com and let us know what you think. This will take you to the Town's home page. To find recycling information, click on Town Departments at left, scroll to Public Works Division, and then select Solid Waste and Recycling.



Mark your calendar!

Give your stuff a chance for a second life by participating in our second annual Town-Wide Yard Sale Weekend, which will be held Saturday, June 23 and Sunday, June 24. Last year, 32 households took part in Yard Sale Weekend, taking advantage of cooperative advertising and many excited shoppers.

As you begin to plan your spring cleaning, set things aside to sell this summer. Registration for the Town-Wide Yard Sale will begin in April. There will be a $10 fee per household. This money will pay for advertising in and around North Andover.

Watch for more details at our newly updated website!

PAYT

(Continued from Page 1)

something, we chuck it, whether it has a useful life beyond our needs or not. Many recyclable items still remain in our trash. Un-recycled "clean" paper and cardboard are the biggest missed opportunities.

In a PAYT system, there is incentive to recycle more and dispose of less built into the fee structure. By paying a per-bag fee for the actual quantity of trash that your family sets out, you stop to think about what really needs to go into the trash bag—and what could go somewhere else for reuse and at a savings to you.

PAYT also addresses the issue of fairness. At present, we all pay the same for trash collection and disposal. This cost per household is built into our real estate tax bill, and the same fee applies whether you put out 10 barrels/bags per week or one. Sometimes we think this service is provided by the town "for free" since we don't ever see a trash bill. It's not free. If the electric company averaged all our electricity usage and charged each household the same, some would cheer and many would shudder. Of course, those who waste electricity would be the ones who make out. Those who conserve would not be rewarded at all. We wouldn't tolerate such a system, and yet, that is exactly how our trash collection/disposal system is set up. It is not fair or equitable.

Unfortunately, PAYT was introduced to the taxpayers under very strained circumstances. Instead of being discussed and evaluated on its merits, it was proposed as a way to raise additional revenue to close budget shortfalls that had nothing to do with trash. At Town Meeting in July, the trash fee was defeated. Yet a great many taxpayers who looked at PAYT agreed that it was a good system. These taxpayers just didn't want to see a new fee added without a corresponding reduction in their tax bill to offset it.

Is PAYT needed in North Andover? Maybe not—if each household would voluntarily reduce its trash tonnage by 20 pounds per week, our waste generation would be as low as the towns that have implemented PAYT. The North Andover Solid Waste Advisory Committee (also known as the Recycling Committee) has excellent suggestions on how you can reduce your trash volume. It can be done. However, the best results for trash reduction across the Commonwealth and across the country have consistently come from PAYT programs that provide monetary incentives to do the wise thing.